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News Release

UDOH Unveils New Hospital Readmission Report *Numbers vary by facility and medical condition*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – When most people leave the hospital, they don't expect to go back right away. However, hospital readmission is more common than many people realize. From 2005 through 2007, more than 23,000 Utah adults—or an average of 21 people per day—were readmitted to an acute-care hospital for a clinically-related reason within 30 days of a previous stay. Details about the readmission findings are featured in a new Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Health Data Committee (HDC) report released today.

The report compares return hospital stay rates for diabetes care, heart and stroke care, hip and knee care, and pneumonia care. The highest rates were found among patients having heart procedures. While no national readmission rates are currently available, Florida has released readmission findings using the same method used for the UDOH report, and several other states are adopting this method. Utah performed favorably when compared to patients in Florida for heart attack, heart bypass surgery, heart failure, pneumonia and hip joint replacement.

“With current national and state concerns about health care, these readmission data are a timely and useful tool for providing the best possible care for all Utahns,” said UDOH Executive Director David Sundwall, M.D.

The report includes two readmission rates, the actual rate and an expected rate. The actual rate for a particular hospital is the number of readmitted patients divided by the number of hospital admissions at risk for readmission. Admissions at risk for readmission do not include some admissions, such as those for patients with advanced cancer, multiple injury, and serious burns for whom readmission is part of an accepted plan of care. Also, patients

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transferred to other hospitals, patients who left the hospital against medical advice, mothers who delivered babies, newborns, and children were not included.

The expected rate for a particular hospital is the expected number of readmitted patients divided by the number of admissions at risk for readmission. The expected number of readmitted patients is the number of readmitted patients expected for each medical condition and procedure, if the hospital had patients who were as ill as those throughout the state.

For all 16 medical conditions and procedures included in the report, the majority of Utah hospitals had actual readmission rates that were about the same as their expected rates. For 11 conditions and procedures, a few hospitals had a higher or lower percentage of readmitted patients than expected. For example, among 31 hospitals that performed at least 30 hip joint replacements, two hospitals had a lower percentage of readmissions and four hospitals had a higher percentage of readmitted patients than expected.

“Avoiding preventable readmissions requires teamwork between patients and their health care providers,” said Carol Masheter, Ph.D., UDOH Epidemiologist and author of the report. “The report can serve as a springboard for discussion so patients can talk with their health care providers and gain a better understanding of what they can do to avoid readmission to the hospital. Also, hospitals and health care systems may find this readmission information useful for improvement of the quality of patient care.”

The full report can be found at <http://health.utah.gov/myhealthcare>.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.